

The conditions of the other three activists are unknown because they have been denied consular access to representatives of South Korea, and they have been refused family and attorney visits as well. Like Kim, they were arrested on March 29, 2012 under Communist China's nebulous "threat to national security" edict, but further reasons for their detainment have not been provided. There are well-founded concerns that they have undergone harsh interrogations.

I commend the "Committee for the Release of North Korean Human Rights Activist Kim Young Hwan" for raising awareness of this critical human rights issue, and urge human rights advocates to press for the immediate release of these brave pro-democracy activists.

CONGRATULATIONS TO TAIWAN
PRESIDENT MA YING-JEOU ON
HIS SECOND INAUGURATION

HON. HOWARD COBLE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 17, 2012

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, May 20, 2012, marks Taiwan President Ma Ying-jeou's second and final inauguration. It is not only Taiwan's democracy that its citizens and the world will celebrate that day, but also Taiwan's economic achievements of the last 60 years.

Just as it was an early Asian proponent of democratic principles and ideals, Taiwan was also an early adapter and proponent of what is commonly today called globalization. Taiwan, Asia's first Economic Tiger, embraced market reforms in the 1950s and quickly launched some of the best known, and most efficient, original equipment manufacturers that came to serve many U.S. firms. Today, Taiwan is a technology powerhouse and the island is firmly entrenched in the top tier of developed world markets.

While many other markets have shown a disturbing tendency to turn inwards when global economic conditions get tough, Taiwan has consistently kept its trade and investment doors open. A founding member of the Asia Development Bank in 1966, Taiwan also joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001 and further acceded to the VVTO's Government Procurement Agreement in 2009.

Since his first inauguration in 2008, President Ma has steadily removed many of the longstanding trade and investment barriers to mainland China, positioning Taiwan as a global gateway to and from the so-called "Greater China" market. This new outlook culminated in the 2010 signing of the Economic and Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) between Taiwan and mainland China. The ECFA benefits not only Taiwan firms and consumers, but aids U.S. interests by protecting intellectual property rights.

I encourage all of my colleagues in congratulating Taiwan President Ma on his inauguration, applaud Taiwan's many economic achievements since the 1950s, and support enhanced economic relations between the United States and Taiwan.

INTRODUCTION OF THE VOTER
EMPOWERMENT ACT

HON. JOHN LEWIS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 17, 2012

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Voter Empowerment Act, with 123 of my colleagues. The right to vote is precious, almost sacred. It is the most powerful non-violent tool we have in a democratic society. It controls everything we do from the time we're born until the moment we die. And that's why the leaders standing with me today believe voting should be simple, easy and accessible to every citizen.

But there are 51 million Americans who are not registered, and it's harder for them to register today than it was just one year ago. In this age of technology, our country is moving backward, not forward. Since the beginning of last year, 176 bills have been introduced in 41 states making it harder and more difficult for people to participate in the democratic process.

In the last election 3 million eligible voters showed up to the polls to vote and were turned away because of failures in our registration system. We need to do something about this. The Voter Empowerment Act represents the leadership of many members of the Democratic Caucus who believe we must include the voice of every American citizen.

The American people should be asking why there is not a bipartisan push to enable Americans to cast a ballot that will be counted. We must not be silent while leaders we elect take our voting rights away. The vote is the soul and the heart of the democratic process. People died for the right to vote, and some of them were people I knew. I hope we will not return to the days of overt discrimination before we decide to do something about it.

The Voter Empowerment Act modernizes the voter registration system in this nation. It helps voters with disabilities, members of the military and young people to fully access their right to vote and to have their vote counted. The bill restores the integrity of the voting system, by providing well-informed, well-trained poll workers who know the law, and ensuring that election officials don't have a vested interest in the outcome of political campaigns. It protects voters from deceptive practices and intimidation and prohibits voter caging. It will ensure that every vote is counted. The bill creates a national hotline so that problems are reported, corrected and prevented in real time, and it reauthorizes the Election Assistance Commission, the only agency with election administration expertise, to ensure the highest standards are being met nationwide.

Today with the introduction of the Voter Empowerment Act, we are making a major step. We are asking all of the American people and the press to pay attention to these problems because they are a threat to democracy as we know it.

I ask all members, from both sides of the aisle to join us in this effort to open up the democratic process to every American.

EXPRESSING SENSE OF HOUSE RE-
GARDING IMPORTANCE OF PRE-
VENTING IRAN FROM ACQUIRING
A NUCLEAR WEAPONS CAPA-
BILITY

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 15, 2012

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise as a cosponsor of H. Res. 568 to commend Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN and Ranking Member BERMAN for crafting this bi-partisan resolution and to urge my colleagues to support the bill.

As President Obama has made clear, it is unacceptable for Iran to develop a nuclear weapon. The U.N. Security Council has passed numerous resolutions demanding that Iran comply with the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and suspend its nuclear enrichment activities. The IAEA has repeatedly found Iran to be in violation of the U.N. resolutions.

A nuclear-armed Iran would pose a grave threat to the State of Israel, a country the President of Iran has stated should "be wiped off the map." A nuclear Iran would also trigger a nuclear-arms race in the Middle East that would further destabilize an already volatile region. It is in the national security interests of the United States to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons.

The economic sanctions imposed on Iran have succeeded in bringing the Iranians to the negotiating table in Istanbul. It remains to be seen whether the Iranians are simply engaged in stall-tactics or are willing to end their effort to produce weapons-grade nuclear material. I know the Obama Administration will insist on a verifiable agreement when talks resume later this month. This resolution should send a strong signal to the Iranian regime that Congress stands with President Obama on this critical matter.

SUPERVISORY SPECIAL AGENT D.
DARELL DONES

HON. LOU BARLETTA

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 17, 2012

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate D. Darell Dones, Supervisory Special Agent (SSA) at the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), who will receive a doctorate degree in Biodefense Terrorism from George Mason University tonight, May 17, 2012.

For 23 years, SSA Dones has worked with the FBI. Seven years ago, he was assigned to the Behavioral Science Unit (BSU). As a criminal behaviorist, SSA Dones provides a criminal and behavioral consultation of extreme violent offenders to requesting law enforcement agencies. He is also responsible for teaching basic and advanced investigative techniques and courses concerning Psychosocial Behavior, Mindset, and Intelligence of Violent Street and Prison Gangs, Applied Psychology, and Violent Criminal Analysis. Most recently, SSA Dones participated in a series of seminars titled "Operation Gang Up," in my district with me and Pennsylvania State Senator John Yudichak. SSA Dones plays a critical role in this community-led, anti-gang initiative.